

OBEDIENCE to GOD the best security
against our ENEMIES.

A

FAST-SERMON

PREACHED in

Maid-Lane, in Southwark,

NOVEMBER 10, M DCC XLII.

By ©. HUGHES, D. D.

*If ye walk in my statutes and keep my commandments,
and do them—I will give peace in the land, and
none shall make you afraid—Ye shall chase your ene-
mies and they shall fall before you by the sword—I
will be your GOD, and ye shall be my people:—But
if ye will not hearken unto me,—I will set my face
against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies;
they that hate you shall reign over you,—and ye shall
be delivered into the hand of the enemy. Levit. xxvi.*

L O N D O N:

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PSALM LXXXI. 13, 14.

O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways ! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.



WE are *this day* called together, by publick authority, to celebrate a religious *fast* : to humble our souls before GOD, under a sense of national sins, whereby we have greatly provoked the divine majesty ; earnestly to implore his pardon ; and to supplicate his kind and powerful assistance, in those circumstances of intricacy and perplexity, in which the nation is at present involved.

OUR gracious SOVEREIGN has been under a necessity of engaging in a war with a neighbouring nation ; whose unjust incroach-

ments upon our trade, barbarous treatment of our mariners, and insolent claiming of privileges, to which they have no right, could no longer be borne.—By *this* an appeal, as to the equity of our cause, is made to the great GOD, *the supreme judge of the whole earth*^a; whose *kingdom ruleth over all*^b; his *name is JEHOVAH, the most high over all the earth*^c: to him, I say, an appeal is now made about the justice of the war: and our hope is, that HE will determine the controversy in *our* favour, and utterly subdue our enemies.—GOD has not however seen fit remarkably to interpose in our favour *as yet*; the success of the war betwixt the two nations has been dubious; and where advantages have been gained, they have been attended with circumstances, which very much abated the value of them: multitudes of lives have been lost, great damage done to our navies, and very considerable losses have fallen to our share; and perhaps equal, if not greater, damages have been sustained by our enemies.

IN this precarious situation of affairs, GOD is most certainly to be sought to, as *our* GOD and the GOD of *salvation*^d: for tho' since the commencement of the war, a solemn day has been appointed by the
KING'S

^a Ps. xciv. 2.^b Ps. ciii. 19.^c Ps. lxxxiii. 18.^d Ps. lxviii. 20.

KING's authority at three several times, for this purpose; yet, as GOD has not thought fit to give us all the success, we could have hoped, nor a full answer to our prayers in the entire overthrow of our enemies, as we wished; it is highly proper that we should *continue instant in prayer*^e: for *who knows*, but GOD may yet have mercy upon us, and be prevailed upon to appear for *our joy*, and to the *shame of our enemies*^f: Our hope, and *our help too, is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth*^g.

BLESSED be GOD therefore, who has put it into the heart of our KING, *again* to proclaim a solemn fast, to be observed through these nations; with renewed zeal and fervour to implore him, to arise and plead our cause; to baffle the designs of our adversaries, whether secret or open; to deliver us from all possible danger; to succeed our arms by sea and by land; and by his overruling providence to *tread down all our enemies*^h.—THIS is the design of the *present solemnity*; the sacred work of *this day*! wherein the whole nation are in a publick and solemn manner to seek the face of GOD, and to supplicate the kind interposition of his providence in our behalf, at this critical and important juncture.

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^e Rom. xii. 12. ^f Isa. lxvi. 5. ^g Ps. cxxiv. 8.
^h Ps. cviii. 13.

METHINKS, I would interpret *this* as a token for good; and would from hence hope, that GOD will *make bare his arm and come and save* us; that we shall experience his powerful assistance, in answer to the earnest supplications and united prayers, addressed to him from all the faithful in the land. Sure! this is a good symptom, that GOD has not quite given us up! but, if our prayers are fervent and sincere, we may still hope, that they will *enter into the ears of the Lord of SABAOTH*ⁱ; and that, in answer to them, he will command salvation for us; and will so determine the present dispute, that peace may be restored upon lasting and honourable terms, and the prosperity of our King and our country may be most effectually secured.

BUT whereas it has not pleased GOD, though once and again sought to upon this account, to give any prospect of such a happy time at hand; but he has rather appeared, in some instances, to frown upon us: every serious christian will not only be thoughtful, what the consequences may be; but will be also enquiring what it is, that hinders GOD from giving us that success, which we have asked at his hands.—And I wish with all my soul, that what GOD says
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ⁱ Jam v. 4.

in the *text*, with respect to his ancient people the children of *Israel*, and his conduct towards them in relation to their enemies, might not too justly be considered as a full answer to that enquiry: I very much fear, these words contain the true reason, why God has not *subdued* our *enemies*, nor more illustriously *turned his hand against* our *adversaries*; namely, because though we are called by his name, and profess ourselves to be his people, yet we have not *bearkened to* him, nor *walked in his ways*.

NEITHER the *author* of this *psalm*, nor the *occasion* of its being composed, is certainly known. In the title it is styled a psalm of or for *Asaph*; but whether he was the penman of it, or was only employed to set it to music, is doubtful: it will not be necessary to give you the connection of the text, with the other parts of the psalm: the words I have now read may be considered *separately*: and I shall endeavour to give you their full sense, in what I shall offer to your serious consideration under three general propositions; which will lead us to several thoughts, very suitable to the solemn occasion of this day.

- I. THAT where any communities or nations of men profess themselves God's *people*; it is highly incumbent upon them,

Obedience to God *the best*

them, in virtue of such a profession, to *hearken to him, and to walk in his ways.*

II. THAT the great GOD has it in his power, whenever he pleases, to *subdue the enemies* of his *people*: he can, if he sees fit, do it *soon* and with all imaginable ease; it is only his *turning his hand against them*, and the matter is effected, they are *at once* subdued.

III. THAT neglect of GOD, and disobedience to him, is oftentimes *the reason*, why GOD does not exert his power, in subduing the enemies of his *people*, either so *soon* or so *effectually*, as he otherwise would.

I PROPOSE to enlarge on each of these general heads of discourse, and to improve them in proper practical remarks. And would to GOD I might be so happy, as to suggest those thoughts, which may dispose our minds to seriousness on this solemn occasion, and put us into a fit frame of spirit, to be intercessors with GOD for his mercy to our King and our country.

I. THAT, where any communities or nations of men profess themselves GOD's *people*; it is highly incumbent upon them, in virtue of such a profession,

sion, to *hearken to GOD and to walk in his ways.*

THE great GOD is to be considered as having a right to govern *all creatures*; they are *his own*, and subject to his authority; they live and subsist by his bounty, and must be under his control; the *lower* rank of beings, in their several stations, and according to their several capacities, act agreeably to *the law of creation*, and are subject to their maker; and thus should *man*, the glory of the visible creation, yield obedience to the supreme being, the eternal GOD, as his rightful owner, his absolute proprietor and his sovereign ruler: *this* every man stands obliged to; and as he is made a *reasonable* creature, capable of *moral* government, his great *creator* has an undoubted right to prescribe laws for the rule of his conduct; and *man* is obliged to conform to those laws, whenever they are sufficiently notified to him, as the will of his maker. —This is the certain duty of *every man* considered *singly* and by himself:—the obligation lies equally strong upon nations and *communities* of men, *collective* bodies of people; *these* being only so many reasonable creatures, combined and united together for mutual defence and comfort, who still are bound to observe the law of their *creator*

B GOD:

GOD: and as the welfare of all societies depends upon the divine favour and blessing, they are so far from being discharged from an *obligation* to obey his laws, that *it* is rather strengthened hereby; and for the sake of the peace and prosperity of the *whole* society, all the *members* should encourage one another to *bearken to GOD, and to walk in his ways*: for, as *Samuel* tells the children of *Israel*, if they *fear and serve the Lord in truth with all their heart*, he will *do great things* for them; but (pray observe!) *if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your King^k*. GOD, who builds them up into a nation, will destroy and cut them off from being a people, if they forsake him, and cease to walk in his ways.

UNDER this general head I would

1. SUGGEST some *particular* instances, wherein this *bearkening to GOD, and walking in his ways* consists; and
2. SHOW upon what *principles*, a professing people are obliged to such a dutiful regard to GOD.

1. LET me suggest some *particular* instances, wherein this *bearkening to GOD, and walking in his ways* consists.

(1.) IT

^k 1 Sam. xii. 24, 25.

(1.) IT supposes a constant care *to know the mind and will of God*; that men do not contentedly remain ignorant of it, but diligently improve all the advantages and opportunities they have of becoming well-acquainted with it.

Now, as the blessed God has been graciously pleased, over and above the notices he has given of his will by the LAW OF NATURE, *the law written in our hearts*, to make a *revelation* thereof more at large in the SACRED SCRIPTURES of the *Old and New Testaments*: it is in the power of all nations under heaven to become acquainted with his laws. It should accordingly be the care of the *governing part* of all nations, to have copies of the bible dispersed throughout their several kingdoms and dominions: that both the *governors*, and the *governed*, may have opportunity of learning their duties out of that sacred book. The care, which good king *Josiah* took, upon finding the book of the law, both to read in it himself, and to diffuse the knowledge of it amongst all ranks of people under his authority, is mentioned in the sacred records with peculiar commendation; and the memorial of it is preserved there for his everlasting honour.

IN all nations under heaven, generally speaking, great zeal and care is discovered in preserving and spreading the knowledge of

the law of their GOD, whatever is supposed to be so. *Mahometans*, and all sorts of *Pagans* show a great regard for the doctrines and precepts of their religion, as coming from heaven; and with great industry propagate them amongst all people.—And sure all *Christian* governments, who profess to believe in *Jesus* the Son of GOD, and *certainly* have the last and best edition of the will of GOD in the *gospel*, should do all they can to preserve and spread the knowledge of *his* laws among their people; and to this end should take special care, that true and faithful copies thereof should be published, *that none may perish for lack of knowledge.*

AND this is professed to be done indeed by all *Christian* communities, except where *popery* has set up her standard, and the *man of sin* is permitted to reign. *There* the use of the *holy scriptures* in a *known tongue* is forbid to the people, nor are they allowed to read for themselves: they must with a blind implicate faith *receive the law from the priests*, in what manner or measure they see fit to deal it out to them, and always mixed with their own *traditions*; whereby in many instances they *make void the law of GOD*. Thus do they industriously endeavour to keep the common people *ignorant*, that they may have them more disposed to *submit* to their impositions.

I WILL

I WILL borrow a passage from *an excellent writer*, very much to the purpose ; “ the
 “ *Romanists* (says he) not only deny this
 “ [i. e. reading the word of God] to be
 “ the duty of the laity, but have made it
 “ impossible to them, whilst they forbid
 “ them the use of the holy scriptures (hav-
 “ ing put the bible itself, translated into
 “ the mother-tongue into their *index expur-*
 “ *gatorius*.) In *Protestant* countries, par-
 “ ticularly in *England*, they are more on
 “ the reserve in this matter; and will upon
 “ occasion grant their licence to *certain* per-
 “ sons to have the *bible* in their own lan-
 “ guage; which implies however, that it
 “ is not free for all, nor for any without
 “ their permission; and how few can ob-
 “ tain that favour is well known. But
 “ never was there a more daring usurpation
 “ of proud and presumptuous worms; a
 “ more open affront offered to the great
 “ lawgiver of the church, or a grosser in-
 “ stance of unmercifulness to the souls of
 “ men. It was a just complaint of Arch-
 “ bishop *Tillotson* on this head; *it is a hard*
 “ *case* (says he) *the church of Rome reduces*
 “ *men to, who will neither allow them any*
 “ *salvation out of their church, nor the best and*
 “ *most effectual means of salvation, when in*
 “ *it**.”—But no great wonder, that such a
 prohibition

* *Bennet's Christ. Orat.* p. 17.

prohibition of the free use of the *bible* should take place in *popish* countries; because the governing and most knowing part amongst them must be sensible, that if the *people in common* were allowed to read the word of God, and to judge for themselves; [the unquestionable right of every reasonable creature!] many of their absurd superstitions would soon be rejected with scorn and abhorrence, and so *the hope of their gains would be gone*¹: for it is *by this craft*, this subtle imposing method, they *have their wealth*^m.—The Lord deliver us from this spiritual thralldom! may *protestant* principles always prevail here! and our religious liberties be still continued to these nations, under the auspicious influences of our present most gracious KING, [whom God long preserve!] and his royal descendants to the very end of time!

(2.) *HEARKENING to God, and walking in his ways* does further include a *ready conformity to his will*, as far as we know it. All *knowledge* should ever lead to *practice*; and indeed it is good for nothing, nay worse than nothing, without it: what can it possibly avail me to have the most exact knowledge of my duty, if I am nevertheless negligent of it, and careless to perform it? certainly in such a supposed case knowledge can be of no service; but rather
must

¹ Acts xvi. 19.^m Acts xix. 25.

must tend to enhance my sin, and aggravate my punishment.

As therefore in a *christian* nation, the *rulers* should take care to preserve and spread the knowledge of their holy religion amongst all ranks of people within their dominions: so they ought to see to it, that a conformity to the rules of duty therein prescribed be, as far as possible, secured:—and this may most probably be effected, if a due regard be had to two things; *viz.*

I.] THAT the *rulers themselves make conscience of observing the law of God*; and so become examples to the other members of the community.

It was a very old remark, that the examples of princes and great men have a vast influence upon the conduct of the inferior ranks of people *. How careful then should such be to lead them into a regular behaviour, and to dispose them to a proper regard to the law of God, by their own example!—but alas! it is to be lamented, that when men are exalted to high degree, they often forget
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* In commune jubes si quid, censetque tenendum
Primus jussa sibi; tunc observantior æqui
Fit populus, nec ferre vetat, cum viderit ipsum
Auctorem parere sibi. Componitur orbis
Regis ad exemplum: nec sic inflectere sensus
Humanos edicta valent, quam vita regentis.
Mobile mutatur semper cum principe vulgus.

Claudian *de 4^{to} Cons. Honor. l. 296.*

the Lord their maker; and swelling with a conceit of their own greatness, they are ready, in the insolent language of *Pharaoh* to say, *who is the Lord that we should obey him*ⁿ? It is fit however, that great men and princes of the earth should often be put in mind, that there is a BEING superior to them all; a GOD, to whom they owe their present greatness; who is able to debase and pull them down, whenever he pleases; and to whose tribunal they are accountable for their whole conduct: the day is coming, when they must all appear before him, upon a level with the meanest of their subjects. A thought of this nature seriously meditated upon, would dispose *great men* to consider, that their being advanced to high degree makes them more conspicuous; and therefore they should be more peculiarly careful, that their conduct be *exemplary*, such as may have a *good influence* upon all beneath them; who probably will aim at forming themselves according to their plan. *They* cannot but know (and happy would it be if they always had it in remembrance!) that though they are by divine providence set at a high remove above the *common rank* of men; yet there is *one* GOD over them all; *one law* obliging both; and

ⁿ Exod. v. 2.

and *one lawgiver and judge*, to whom they are equally accountable.

2.] THAT, as they have power in their hands, the *rulers should do all they can, to secure in the governed part of the community a proper regard to the divine law.*

BESIDES the force of their own example, good laws should be enacted to oblige a conformity to *those laws of God*, which relate to the peace and prosperity of the civil society; and to punish every breach of the divine law, whereby God may be provoked to pour out his judgments upon any people.—It is indeed very surprizing, that human nature should be so corrupt and perverse, that the *promises and the threatnings of the gospel* have not a due influence to restrain from wickedness and to incline to the practice of virtue and religion: these, tho' mostly fetched from an *eternal state* are very little effectual; for in defiance of them multitudes are bold in sin, and altogether neglect the *weighty matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith*°; so that were it not for the terror of *human laws*, and the penalties annexed to them, this earth would be like a *wilderness of wild beasts*, if not a *hell of devils*.

THE *moral law* is summed up in the *ten commandments*. Now I apprehend, that no

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nation can be said to *hearken to* GOD ; unless care be taken to secure a due regard to these commandments ; so far at least, as that the *generality* of the people may be supposed to yield obedience to them : for a nation is to be denominated either *righteous* or *wicked*, from the prevailing of vice or religion among the greatest part of *that* nation, both as to *numbers* and as to *circumstances* in life. When the *rulers* of a nation neglect the ways of GOD, and practise or connive at vice ; and the *greatest* part of the people are like-minded ; then may *that* nation be said, not to *hearken to* the Lord.

I MUST insist upon it indeed, that as to what *relates immediately to* GOD and *conscience*, a magistrate ought to allow every man to judge for himself : for to *his own master he stands or falls* ; and it is a violation of the rights of conscience, if any force or restraint is offered from the civil powers.— But, as to all *acts of religion, which affect society*, as well as *acts of morality*, there the governors should, I think, interpose their authority : for instance, that the worship of idols should not be admitted ; the name of GOD should not be blasphemed ; nor the Lord's-day scandalously profaned ; because all these affect the peace and welfare of the community.

BUT

BUT then in *all* cases of *morality* between man and man, the rulers of every *christian* society should exert themselves to the utmost, in order to secure a due regard to the laws of God; as far as *overt-acts* can be a sufficient evidence. For no *human laws* can possibly make a man *truly* honest and pious: the seat of those principles is in the *heart*, to which *their* influence cannot reach; *they* are only calculated to restrain from *outward* acts, by affixing penalties to the transgressor.

LAWS of this nature are to be found in the records of all *civilized* nations: and there is no community in the whole world, more noted for excellent laws in all these cases, than *our own*; it were to be wished, that they were not neglected as a dead letter. It is an observation concerning *our* country, that we have the *best laws* of any nation, but they are generally the *worst executed*. If there be any foundation for the remark, the more is the pity! I do not take upon me to say, where the fault lies; but this I dare venture to say, that *some* will have a dreadful account to give to the *great ruler of the world* for *this* at the last day.

IT is a thing in itself most *desirable*, and what would greatly tend to the prosperity of any nation, if the *executive* power of the

laws was lodged in the hands *only* of good men; such as are truly religious and virtuous *themselves*, and who from a principle of conscience would discourage and punish vice in *others*; such as, according to the representation the apostle gives of good magistrates, will study to approve themselves *the ministers of GOD for good; not a terror to good works, but to the evil; not bearing the sword in vain; revengers to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil* ^p: this I say is *desirable*, that our magistrates should be conscientious, good men, who will faithfully discharge their duty—but when this will be *entirely* our happy case, I cannot say. I am sure, before it can be expected, one thing is necessary, viz. that *civil offices* should not be considered *merely* as places of honour or profit; but *principally* as stations of trust, and of important duty, for the faithful discharge of which every magistrate is answerable both to God and to his *country*.

I MUST add under this head, that as the governing part of a nation are to *hearken to God and walk in his ways*, in the manner before represented: so the *governed* should be influenced by the good *examples*, and be obedient to the good *laws* of their superiors. And when we talk of religion
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^p Rom. xiii

in a *political* view, perhaps it may fitly be suggested, that both *rulers* and *subjects* must *hearken to God*, by faithfully discharging the duties of their *several stations*, and the *relations* which they bear to one another, as the word of God has prescribed and pointed out those duties.—The duty of *magistrates* is, to avoid all oppression; to judge righteous judgment; to defend and protect their subjects; to secure to them the full enjoyment of *all* their rights and privileges, both *civil* and *religious*; and to govern them according to law.—It is incumbent upon *subjects*, to submit to their rulers and to obey them in all things lawful; to honour and reverence them; not to speak evil of them; nor reproach them; to pray to God for them; and to contribute all they can to make them easy in the faithful and laborious discharge of their office; they must chearfully render to *Cæsar* the things, which are *Cæsar's*; doing whatever is in their power towards the support of the government, and strengthening the hands of those, whom God has placed as rulers over them.

II. I AM now to show, *upon what principles* a professing people are obliged thus to *hearken to God*.

THE

THE proposition is indeed self-evident; and the reasons so obvious, that I shall but barely mention them.

(1.) *THE nature of the thing requires it.* If a nation be called by GOD's name and profess to be *his* people; certainly they ought to support such a profession, by an obediential regard to *their* GOD: if he is our *father* or our *master*, he is intitled to *reverence* and *honour*^a. It is monstrously absurd to call *him* Lord, and *not do the things which he has said*. In mere point of *honour*, if there was no *religion* in it, a professing people should *bearken to their* GOD, and *walk in his ways*.

(2.) A SENSE of *obligation* should dispose to such a conduct. When we seriously consider what a rich variety of *national mercies* we have, and when we think of them as *coming from* GOD, the gifts of *his* providence; surely we must conclude it highly proper, to testify our gratitude to our heavenly benefactor, the *supreme being* whom we avouch for our GOD, and who has always proved himself a good GOD to us: and how can we do less by way of gratitude, than *to bearken to him and walk in his ways*?

(3.) A REGARD to *interest* calls for this. A professing people act contrary to their own interest,

^a Mal. i. 6.

interest, are really enemies to themselves, if they are disobedient to God. The welfare and happiness of all *nations*, as well as of particular *families* or *persons*, depends upon the favour of providence; it therefore highly concerns them to be upon good terms with God, if they desire to be *THAT happy people, whose God is the Lord*: for they have no reason to expect this, unless they are careful to *hearken to God and walk in his ways*. God may indeed bear long with a wicked and disobedient people; but he will not bear always: if notwithstanding their professed relation to him, they continue rebellious, he will *at length* pronounce upon them *LO-AMMI, ye are not my people*; and in consequence of this, he will reject them, and cease from doing them good. *This* the blessed God may possibly do *with reluctance*; but *his honour* requires, that in cases of obstinacy and continued disobedience, he should do it. Thus in the case of the *Israelites*, who were God's people in a very peculiar sense; God bore with them long, warned them again and again of their sins, repeated his threatenings as well as overtures of mercy, was loth to depart from them, *how shall I give thee up Ephraim?* &c. ^r yet at last God executed his wrath upon them, cut them off from

from being a people, and left them to reap the fruits of their chosen folly : Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone [†]. q. d. “ I will “ use no further methods for their recovery, nor concern myself any longer for “ them”; —and *this alone* is sufficient to complete the ruin of any nation ; *wo to them, when God departs from them* [‡].

II. THAT the great GOD has it in his power, whenever he pleases, to *subdue the enemies* of his people : he can, if he sees fit, do it *soon* and with all imaginable ease : it is only his *turning his hand against them*, and the matter is effected, they are at once *subdued*.

THE proposition at first view will be allowed true by all those, who believe the *being* of a GOD, his over-ruling *providence*, and his glorious *perfections*. As for men of *atheistical* principles, who *live without God in the world*, and are *fools enough to say there is no God* ; they must leave all things to the direction of *blind chance*, or *giddy fortune* ; they have no comfortable foundation on which to build hopes of safety, when they are in the greatest dangers ; they have *no rock to fly to, that is higher*

[†] Hos. iv. 17.

[‡] Hos. ix. 12.

bigger than themselves. Whereas it affords divine support and relief to *every good christian*, that let his dangers be ever so great, he has a GOD to go to, an almighty friend, infinitely able to save him from all the designs or attempts of his most powerful enemies. And this is the case with GOD's people *in general*, a nation of christians, as well as *particular* persons. GOD can subdue their enemies with the greatest ease at his will and pleasure. I would here mention two things, in order to prove and illustrate this proposition.

- I. THE infinite *wisdom* and almighty *power* of GOD render him *able* to save his people, and to *subdue their enemies*, at pleasure.

THESE glorious perfections of the DIVINE being demonstrate it absolutely impossible, that HE should ever be *at a loss* to save: there is no distress so low, but he is able to raise out of it; nor any calamity so grievous, but he can deliver from it: our most formidable enemies are all under his control; he can either turn their hearts, or tie up their hands; he is privy to all their most secret designs, and is able to blast them; he knows the full extent of their power, and can at any time check and restrain it; he

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can disappoint their best-concerted schemes, and pour contempt upon their boldest undertakings; he will make them know, that they *imagine a vain thing*; he will *laugh at* their impotent *rage*, and *have them in derision*^u: he will convince them, that his *hand is not shortned, that it cannot save*^x: he can effectually interpose in any case of extremity; and whenever he stirs up himself for the deliverance of any people, and arises to plead their cause, all difficulties shall soon be surmounted, the designed salvation shall quickly be compassed, and he will *tread down all their enemies*^y.

II. WE may argue the truth of the proposition, from those various instances, which in the course of his providence GOD has given, of *subduing the enemies* of his *people*, at his will and pleasure.

A CONSIDERABLE part of the *scripture-history* is taken up, in relating the great salvations, which GOD wrought out, either for his *church and people in general*, or for *particular* saints; in all sorts of dangers; from all kinds of enemies; and through every period of time.

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^u Ps. ii. 1, 4. ^x Isai. lix. 1. ^y Ps. cviii. 13.

SOMETIMES GOD has seen fit to act by *instruments*, whom he has raised up for the seasonable deliverance of his people; at other times he has judged it more proper to act *himself*, and to save by *his own immediate hand*, that all might see and say, *it is the Lord's doing*. To this constant protection and care of providence must be ascribed the continued being of a *christian church* in the world; and the body of *protestants* (who are, if not the *only* church of Christ, yet the *best* and *purest* part of it) must acknowledge the same good hand of GOD, in preserving them from the repeated attempts of their enemies to crush and destroy them. The sweet finger of *Israel* taught that people to sing, "if the LORD
" had not been *on our side*, when men rose
" up against us, then they had swallowed us
" up quick^z:" and *Israel's* is not a singular case; others may borrow the music from *David's* harp, and unite in the same song of praise to the same almighty deliverer. The *christian* religion has all along been under the same divine protection; and so has the *protestant* cause in our own nation. May they still be guarded by almighty power and infinite wisdom! and may our enemies further be convinced, that no weapon formed against us shall ever prosper!

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for

for *he that is our God is the God of salvation*; he will be our saviour in the time of trouble.

REFRESH your memories with the various instances of GOD's delivering his ancient people the *Israelites*, and defeating their enemies in a surprizing manner. These are preserved in the *sacred records* for the support of good people, and to confirm their faith and trust in GOD, when dangers surround them, and their enemies are contriving their ruin. For though *Israel* was GOD's peculiar people; *His* in a sense in which no nation of the earth ever was; yet GOD is disposed to undertake the protection of *all* those, who *bearken to him, and walk in his ways*; by thus acting they become *his* people, and *be as their God* will *subdue their enemies, and turn his hand against their adversaries*.

THE deliverance of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, with the utter destruction of *Pharaoh*, and his mighty host, is an evident proof, that GOD *can*, when he pleases, save his people and subdue their enemies.——In the reign of *Hezekiah*, when *Sennacherib* king of *Assyria* besieged *Jerusalem* with a numerous army, GOD commissioned an angel to deliver *his* people from their enemies; who accordingly *went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore*
and

and five thousand; and the insolent king was forced to return with shame of face to his own land, where he was soon slain by those, who came forth of his own bowels^a. — When an host of a thousand thousand fighting men, with three hundred chariots under the command of Zerah the Ethiopian, came out against Asa king of Judah, God arose for the defence of his people and soon subdued their enemies; they were so entirely overthrown, that they could not recover themselves^b. There is a clause in king Asa's prayer on this occasion, expressed in vigorous and beautiful terms, and deserves our notice; LORD, says he, it is *nothing with thee to help*, whether with many, or with them that have no power: *help us O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude: O LORD thou art our God, let not man prevail against THEE*^c. — I will mention but one scripture-instance more, viz, the wonderful appearance of God in favour of his people, in the reign of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, when his land was invaded by the Ammonites, the Moabites and others, uniting all their forces against him. In these circumstances Jehoshaphat like a pious man, and a good king, proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah; and they came out of all the cities of Judah

^a 2 Kings xix. and 2 Chr. xxxii. ^b 2 Chr. xiv. ^c v. 11.

Judah to seek the Lord, and to ask help of him. *Jehoshaphat* upon this occasion was himself the mouth of the people to the Lord; his prayer is very affecting and solemn, which he closes with these remarkable words (strongly expressive of the temper and sentiments we should have, when we are interceding with God in behalf of our country) *O our God, wilt not thou judge them? for we have no might against this great company, that cometh against us; neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee.* The sacred historian tells us, that this fast was universally observed with the greatest solemnity; *all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives and their children.* In consequence hereof the LORD wrought a mighty salvation for them; their enemies destroyed one another; so that *Jehoshaphat* and his people had not occasion to strike one blow; the business was done ready to their hands; and nothing remained for them, but to express their thankfulness to their great deliverer, and to take away the spoil of their destroyed enemies; which, it seems, was immensely rich, and so much that they were three days in gathering, and still it was more than they could carry away^d.

THESE

^d 2 Chron. xx.

THESE are very signal evidences of GOD's being able at pleasure to subdue the enemies of his people; if he *turns his hand against* them, they perish. Nor were the *Israelites* the *only* people, who have been thus favoured by divine providence. We have glorious instances of the like nature in the annals of *our own* nation; which has often been preserved in a most remarkable manner from the designs of enemies, *at least* as malicious and cruel, as any that *Israel* of old had: when we have been reduced to the most hazardous condition, and our ruin has appeared almost inevitable, our GOD has *made bare his hand*, and wrought out salvation for us.

IN *this* respect GOD has made *Great-Britain* very much to resemble his *ancient people*; and I wish with all my soul, we had not made ourselves so much like to them in *another* respect. I need not tell you, what I mean; I dare say, your own thoughts will prevent me, by suggesting the abominable immorality and profaneness, which reigns amongst us; our base ingratitude both to GOD and men; our perverse restlessness, and constant murmurings, notwithstanding the many blessings we enjoy, and though indeed we are the *happiest* nation under heaven, if we knew and valued *our own* mercies*.

BUT

* O fortunati nimium, sua si bona norint.

BUT let us pass at present from so melancholy a subject, and recollect how GOD has many a time mercifully appeared for our deliverance, and *turned his hand against our adversaries.*

IT would indeed be endless to mention all the passages in the *English* history, which would illustrate this point. The glorious *Revolution* by King WILLIAM of immortal memory; the seasonable *Accession* of his late majesty King GEORGE the *first* of blessed memory, to the throne of these kingdoms (when at *both* times there was but a step between us and ruin) are occurrences of so late a date, that many here I suppose remember *them*; or at least the *latter*: and they *both* evidently prove, how easily the great GOD has saved us, when reduced almost to the last extremity; our apprehensions were justly awakened, our fears were great, and our dangers imminent, when all at once we have been surprized into safety; and the *melancholy* scene has been shifted into one more *bright* and *comfortable*.

IT may not be amiss however, to mention a considerable instance of this kind, in our *English* records; which may be peculiarly proper, as it refers to the same proud and insolent nation, with whom we are now at war.——*viz.*——In the year of
our

our Lord 1588, the *Spaniards* were resolved to exert their utmost power, in order to subdue, and if possible to ruin, this our native country: with this view they fitted out, at an incredible expence, after no less than *three years* preparation, a prodigious fleet of ships of war; these they had the presumptuous vanity to style, *the invincible armada*, as supposing that no power could make head against it, but it must command victory, wherever it should come: and perhaps no nation of *Europe* at that time was able to grapple with such a mighty power. But God appeared on *our* side, and showed with what amazing ease he could procure salvation for us: *HE* commanded *his* wind to blow; a violent storm came down immediately upon the ocean; the *Spanish* fleet was quickly dispersed, *all* the ships were greatly shattered, *many* of them lost, and no less than *thirty-two* of the line of battle were either taken or destroyed, the rest getting back to the ports of *Spain* as well as they could. The Hand of God was in this instance so visible, that even the King of *Spain* himself (as history tells us) could not help being greatly affected with it; for when he received the melancholy news, and was condoled upon the occasion by some great men at court, it is reported that he replied; "I

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" did

“ did not send my fleet to fight with the
“ winds.”

I HOPE the same almighty GOD, who still *holds the winds in his fist*, and directs their motions, who still governs universal nature, will again discover the same kind concern for us, and plead our cause against the same haughty and imperious adversaries! —and perhaps HE had long ago done this, had it not been for our sins; — which thought brings me to the *third general head* of discourse; namely,

III. THAT neglect of GOD, and disobedience to him, are oftentimes *the cause*, why GOD does not exert his power, in subduing the enemies of his people, either so *soon*, or so *effectually*, as he otherwise would.

HAD *Israel* been observant of GOD, he would *soon have subdued their enemies*. Disobedience ties up GOD's hands from giving that help which he *can*, and otherwise *would* most readily grant. He *cannot* do it: it is no way congruous or decorous for GOD *always* to appear in favour of a wicked and rebellious people. The blessed GOD is represented in the text, as speaking with a great degree of tender concern, that he found himself not capable of acting in behalf of
his

his people, as he would have done, if their sins had not prevented him; *O that my people had hearkened unto me, &c.* q. d. "had not *Israel's* sins rendered it altogether improper, that I should appear to plead their cause, their enemies had been crushed long ago; but they must thank themselves for this delay; their sins have obstructed the display of my power and mercy in their salvation; I could have wished it quite otherwise, and should have rejoiced, had I been at liberty, to have subdued their enemies."

SIN is indeed the grand obstruction to the communication of GOD's favours, either to *particular* persons, or to *collective bodies* of men. And in my humble apprehension *here* lies our greatest danger: we have nothing, I think, to fear but from our sins; [the scandalous divisions and animosities of the present day demand a place under that title] these are our *most dangerous* enemies; and *such* enemies too, that there is nothing *too bad*, but may be feared from them; these may provoke GOD, instead of appearing for us, to give us up to the will of our enemies; and then our ruin is completed.

How frequently was GOD provoked by *Israel's* sins, to withhold his help! and what was the consequence of this but temporal ruin? they were often reduced to great dis-

stres; their enemies several times defeated and triumphed over them; and all was owing to *this*, their *glory* and *defence* was departed, their GOD had forsaken them: whilst HE was with them, all things succeeded in the most happy manner; they were in a flourishing condition; a glory and a praise in the earth^e; the wonder and admiration of neighbour-nations, as being in a distinguishing manner THAT *happy people*, whose GOD was the LORD^f:—but when their abominable ingratitude, and obstinate sins had once made a breach betwixt them and their GOD; then swift destruction came upon them like *an armed man* with irresistible force; or as *a mighty torrent*, bearing down all before it.

AND whosoever seriously considers the state and case of *our own* nation with reference to *sin*, will see reason to fear, that GOD has a great controversy with us, and may justly be apprehensive of very dreadful consequences.

IT would be a most *unpleasant* as well as *difficult* task, to enumerate the sins of the present age: and yet perhaps it may be *necessary* to attempt such a thing; at least however to mention some of those horrid abominations, under which our land groans, and for which we may justly expect DIVINE

ven-

vengeance. With reference to these we have cause to say, *all flesh have corrupted their ways*, the contagion is universally spread, the disease is epidemical, and the infection has diffused itself among all ranks of people; men of *high degree*, as well as those of *low*, the *priest* and the *people*, the *rich* and the *poor*, have agreed (one would think) to set GOD at defiance, or at least have in a most shameful manner neglected him, *living too much as without GOD in the world*; as if there was NO SUPREME BEING to whom they are accountable.

THE vile *abuse* and *profaning* of GOD's *holy name*, by execrable oaths and curses, is one of the crying sins of the present age. This so common, this so public! what a reproach to a nation called *Christian*! this the language not of the *vulgar*, the meaner sort of people only; but of some, who are by divine providence raised to high *dignity*, and *set among the princes of the people*! A sad way of *rendering to GOD for his distinguished benefits* to them!——Nor is it any excuse, that this is generally the effect of *beated passion*, or of a *disordered brain*: if a man *first* makes himself a *beast*, and *then* turns into a *devil*, I know no abatement of guilt here! no, this is doubling the sin and aggravating the punishment; nor will such wicked

wicked wretches pretend to excuse themselves at *that day*; when all their curses will be turned with great severity upon themselves, and they shall *in vain* lament their remediless and extreme misery.

ADD to this, *the scandalous profanation of the LORD's-day*. The command of God is, *ye shall keep my sabbaths*^h; or as it is expressed in the *fourth* commandment; *Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy*ⁱ. But alas! how little of such a religious regard is there now had to the *christian sabbath*! how free do many make with GOD in this instance! he has said, *keep the sabbath-day to sanctify it*^k; he claims a special propriety in *this day* as *his own*; and has put his own stamp and name upon it; it is *the LORD's-day*^l, set apart for his worship and service, and should be spent in his fear and to his praise. But as if they had never heard any such things, what multitudes of people are there amongst us, who make this *sacred day* only a season of *idle sloth*, if not of *sinful diversions*! neither the *church*, nor their *families*, nor their *closets* are witnesses to any serious transactions between GOD and their souls; they do not so much as pretend to pay any homage to the SUPREME BEING on *that day*, more than on *other days*.—

^h Levit. xxvi. 3.
12. ⁱ Rev. i. 10.

^j Exod. xx. 8.

^k Deut. v.

days.—*This* is a crying sin, for which God will no doubt reckon with any nation; and by some terrible judgment very probably he will sooner or later discover his resentment.—*This* sin should be particularly guarded against; for, by sad observation and experience, it has been often found and acknowledged, to be an unhappy introduction to *all manner* of wickedness; it has made dreadful gaps in conscience; and rendered many a person *in length of time* capable of *such* vices, as *once* he utterly abhorred; and would with great indignation have said concerning them; *what is thy servant a dog, that he should do these wicked things*^m!

WE must not forbear here to mention *the vast spreading of infidelity, and the unparalleled insolence, with which the most sacred things are treated by some men.* Perhaps the christian religion was never more contemned; or however not so *openly* and so *freely* ridiculed and reproached, as at this day. Time was, when the profane *atheist* and the scoffing *deist* was obliged to hide in corners, and only now and then dared to throw out sneers upon religion.—But in our day of *boasted light and knowledge*, it is deemed a sort of accomplishment to be able to crack a jest upon things *most sacred*; to throw out some spiteful and invidious reflections upon the

the *ministers* or *professors* of religion: whether true or false, is not very material; the purpose is fully answered, if they are dressed up in a way of ridicule, to create a laugh, and promote the mirth of the company:—this is melancholy to think upon; and *peculiarly* sad, when any who have set out well in early life, and have had the advantage of a pious education, have lost all their seriousness, and are sunk into the vile character of *scoffers at religion*!

To these must be subjoined, and ought to be lamented as *national sins* of a deep dye, the frequent *murders*, *adulteries* and *unclean-ness* of all sorts, the *barbarities* and inhuman *cruelties*, the *thefts* and *robberies*, the *false-ness* and *perjuries*, the *pride* and *haughti-ness*, the *covetous* and *ambitious* practices, the neglect and violation of *relative duties*; disobedience of children to parents, cruel and unnatural carriage of parents to children; the *contempt* of all *order*, and as it were *levelling* all *ranks* and *degrees* of men, betwixt whom God has made a manifest distinction, and to every one of which there are proper and *distinct duties* assigned.—The sawcy liberty, with which our *gover-nors* and those in authority over us, are now adays treated, not only in *common conversa-tion*, but also in *publick print*; where every thing is represented in the worst light, and
all

all methods are taken to promote popular discontents and to increase the sad animosities: which are *already* risen to such a degree, as portend manifest ruin to our country; unless the great God, who has power over all created nature, shall *still the tumult of the people*; and shall open their eyes to see their true interest; that they may not be any longer deluded, by such as have ever been the avowed enemies of our country; and wish for nothing more, than to see the whole nation involved in a general confusion.—But *he that is our God*, is also *the God of salvation*, and he will, I trust, blast all the designs of our enemies, and *have them in derision*.——Upon this head I shall borrow the well-chosen words of an eminent prelate of the *church of England*; who in an excellent sermon before *Queen Anne* says thus; “ All sins of sedition, undutifulness, disrespect, or even coldness and indifferency towards governors, have a natural tendency to obstruct the business and hinder the success of war:” and upon this subject he enlarges in this admirable manner; “ When the weighty business of war lies upon the shoulders of any government, subjects should do all in their power to make it sit as light and as easy there, as is possible. And it will very much help towards this end, for
F “ them

“ them to shew themselves perfectly well
 “ satisfied and pleased with what their go-
 “ vernors do in this arduous affair, and to
 “ return them their utmost thanks, praise
 “ and honour for their care about it. But
 “ if on the contrary they grow uneasy un-
 “ der the management of affairs, oppose
 “ and clog the administration of them;
 “ and much more, if they let this their
 “ uneasiness break out into open discon-
 “ tents, revilings, reproaches and *railing*
 “ *accusations* against their governors; this
 “ will be a sure way, both to discourage
 “ and obstruct the proceedings of their go-
 “ vernors, for the common good; and
 “ likewise a sure way to give hopes and ad-
 “ vantages to the enemies of their govern-
 “ ment, who always stand ready to em-
 “ brace and caress seditious subjects, in or-
 “ der to make them their tools; and God
 “ knows [*pray observe!*] they too often
 “ find them very effectual ones for their
 “ purpose*.”

ONCE more; were we to speak to any
 of the *rulers of the land*, it might be hum-
 bly inquired, whether *the application of the*
 LORD'S-SUPPER [that most sacred and solemn
 institution of our dear redeemer] *to secular*
purposes, may not be deemed a *prostitution*
 of it, and altogether unsuitable to the glo-
 rious

* Archbishop Dawes's works vol. i. p. 229.

rious design of its original appointment? And if I might be so far indulged, I would humbly ask further, whether *receiving the sacrament* being made absolutely necessary, to qualify men for *civil places*, may not be suspected, as approaching very near to what the inspired *psalmist* styles *framing mischief by a law*ⁿ: if the great God should resent it as *such*, I tremble to think of the consequences: and is there not reason to fear, lest the prostitution of so sacred an ordinance, being interpreted as a shameful and audacious affront to the blessed JESUS, *the only king and lawgiver in his church*, should some time or other draw down the judgments of God upon us?—I do not speak now as a *protestant dissenter*, I speak as a *christian* only; and I freely say, that in my apprehension the *main* evil of the *Test-Act* lies in *this*, viz. that it obliges *all*, who have a place of honour or profit to *receive the holy sacrament*; so that many, who are no way qualified for so sacred a solemnity, are however obliged to it, or must be content to lose or go without their place. And as in *most* cases we may be sure, that men will at all hazards submit to the law, rather than forego a good place; so we may conclude, that *many* go to the LORD'S-table for a *qualification*, who have no *inward*

F 2 disposition

ⁿ Pf. xciv. 20.

disposition or fitness for such a solemn ordinance: and for want of that fitness, it is to be feared, they will be found to be *guilty of the body and blood of Christ, and to eat and drink damnation to themselves*; whatever dreadful evils these phrases imply and comprehend.—And as this is made *a law*, may it not be fitly asked, whether it is not a *national guilt*? And if so, should it not without delay be removed, lest it provoke God to pour out his wrath upon the nation?—I must take the freedom to add here; that the *Test-act*, considered in this view, without its reference to *protestant-dissenters*, being an affront to the honour of Christ; one would suppose, that the reverend *bishops and clergy* should be the *most forward* of all men in the nation to have this grievance removed; and that they should use their utmost endeavours for this purpose; as those who hope to give a good account to their LORD and *master* another day. I sincerely wish and pray, that *they and all the ministers* of Christ, may so wisely improve their several talents, and so faithfully discharge the duty of their stations, as that *when the chief SHEPHERD and BISHOP of souls shall appear*, we may all *receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away*°. *

NOR

° 1 Pet. ii. 25. and v. 4.

* I am verily persuaded, that did *these men* of sacred character,

NOR must we here forbear mentioning the visible *decay* of the life and power of serious religion in *professors* themselves. How lukewarm and indifferent do many such grow to the practice of godliness! and this, I fear, adds no small weight to the nation's guilt.

Now

character, *higher* and *lower*, heartily concur in recommending the *repeal* of the *Test-Act* for GOD's sake, the matter might be easily accomplished; and the bulk of the nation would be abundantly satisfied. There are scarce *any* in *places*, but what would be willingly excused from qualifying themselves according to this *act*: and *many* qualify themselves, who otherwise would scarce have dared to have approached that solemn ordinance; their allowed sins and lusts telling them loudly, that they cannot be *welcome guests*, and must expect to carry away a *curse* rather than a *blessing*. Oh dreadful thought! I pity the *ministers*, who are obliged to give the sacrament to such profane and wicked wretches; and I pity *them* too, who are under the cruel necessity of *receiving the sacrament*, when they are not rightly prepared for it, or else of foregoing that, which may be the only support of themselves, and perhaps of a numerous family too. The true reason, why *attempts to repeal* this *act* have miscarried, is I apprehend, because it has always been considered as doing a favour to the *Dissenters*, and so the *Church* has been jealous and uneasy: and if the attempt begins from the same quarter ever so often, I dare venture to prophesie, that it will meet with the same fate; and for this plain reason, ONE set of men *hate* the *Dissenters*, knowing them to have been always the friends of liberty, the avowed sticklers for the *Revolution* in 1688, and most steady adherents to the *Protestant succession* in the illustrious house of HANOVER, through

Now these and several other sins, which are found amongst us, should be considered as so many obstructions to God's mercy; *the sad causes*, why he has not in a more remarkable manner appeared for us, since the commencement of the present war. We may think, that if we had been a more obedient people, and had walked in God's ways, he would have given us greater advantages against our adversaries; and had it not been for our crying abominations, very probably he would long ago have subdued our enemies; so far at least, as to have brought them to reasonable terms of peace.——Sin has a natural tendency to produce this effect—in similar cases it has been attended with such unhappy consequences.——God grant, it may not any longer in *our* case!

I CLOSE with a few practical remarks.

I. As

through all the scenes of its hazards and dangers: and the OTHER set of men *do not love* them; and have neither the *honour* nor the *gratitude*, to remove a brand of odium from a body of men, who, I am bold to say, have been as *faithful* and as dutiful *subjects*, as ever prince reigned over. Our *forefathers* were always reckoned among the *quiet of the land*; and I pray God the *glory* of that character may abide with their *posterity*, let them be ever so much *neglected* by those, who *ought* to use them better.

1. As we are a *professing* people, let us be prevailed upon to *hearken to God, and walk in his ways*. O that the whole nation, as one man, might determine upon such a conduct, *this day!* what a blessed effect would it be of *this day's* solemnity! and how happy, that a *fast* was appointed!

AND in order to compass this *glorious* end, let us all now resolve;—that we will be more careful *ourselves* to *walk in God's ways*, than ever;—that we will use our endeavours to persuade *others*, with whom we converse, to *hearken to God* too;—and let us not cease to pray, that God by his *Holy Spirit* would effectually incline both *us* and *others* to the love and practice of our duty. The residue of the *spirit* is with him; and if he sees fit to pour it forth in a plentiful degree, it is possible even for a whole nation to be born at once ^P.

2. Is GOD able, whenever he pleases, to *subdue the enemies* of his people; let us from hence learn,

1.) THAT it is of great consequence, to approve ourselves to be his people, and by obedience to his laws to secure him on our side. If he be *for* us, we need be under no concern who are *against* us; he is above all the powers of earth, and can crush them when he pleases. Let us then
by

48 Obedience to God the best

by all possible means secure *his* important friendship; for he will be *with us ONLY*, WHILE we are *with him* ^q.

2.) THAT we should earnestly and humbly represent the case of our country to God in prayer; imploring him to *turn his hand against* our *adversaries* at this critical juncture, and to *subdue* our enemies. Let every pious soul, who is used to pray, and has interest with God, plead the cause of his country with zeal and fervour; *the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much* ^r: see to it, that this noble character belongs to you; and then bow before the throne of grace, and intercede for your country's welfare.

OUR *national sins* may indeed discourage prayer, and fill our faces with shame and confusion, whenever we come to God on this errand: but then, past experiences of God's mercy, and the consideration of his infinite grace and goodness, may help to animate our prayers.—And it may be some encouragement to consider, that the cause in which we are engaged is a *good* and *righteous* cause; the war on our part *just*; and therefore we may hope for the countenance and help of the *righteous* governor of the world:—a war begun not with ambitious views, to oppress our neighbours,
to

^q 2 Chron. xv. 2.

^r James v. 16.

to encroach upon their properties, nor to enlarge our own dominions—but—necessarily and unavoidably undertaken, in order to put a stop to the unjust and arbitrary encroachments made upon us by a haughty and insolent neighbour; attended with the manifest prejudice of our trade, and with intolerable hardships to many of our countrymen:—a war, entered upon in maintenance of the liberties of *Europe*; as well as to defend and secure those advantages to *our own country*, which had been often justly confirmed to us, as our unquestionable right, upon the solemn faith of repeated treaties;—and I may add, in the necessary defence of our *civil* and *religious* privileges; which are the envy of our *Popish* adversaries; and which they will not fail soon to strip us of, if ever GOD *for our sins* should permit it to be in their power. Which GOD forbid! Let every one of us pray earnestly, that those invaluable liberties, which GOD has hitherto secured to us by an amazing train of wonders, may still be preserved safe under the same almighty protection, to the latest posterity.

3. Do our *national sins* give us cause to apprehend, that for their sakes GOD *has not yet subdued our enemies*, and may still forbear to *turn his hand against our adversaries*? then,

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I.) WHEN-

1.) WHENEVER we offer ourselves to be intercessors to God in behalf of our country, let us be sure to cry aloud for the pardon of all *national sins*. If we can but get our sins removed, we need not doubt God's favour. Now addressing such a petition to God, *supposes* a serious sense of national guilt, and a hearty sorrow for it: and would to God there were such a temper in every *individual* person in this nation!—There is indeed, I believe, *some* sense of sin in *all* persons; and *every one* must own, that we are a *sinful people*, *laden with iniquity*; we have even declared our sins like *Sodom*; so that the charge of guilt cannot be denied;—but *the* sense of sin, which I am now urging, is such a serious conviction of the evil of sin, as produces in the soul holy relentings, sincere contrition, deep humiliation and fixed resolutions against it: *this* is, what I wish every member of our civil community was possessed of; it being *the proper frame and temper*, with which we should always appear before God, whenever we supplicate his merciful help either for ourselves, or for our country.

2.) IN order to prevail with God for the pardon of *national sins*, we must endeavour all we can to promote *repentance* and *reformation* both in *ourselves* and in *others*.

others. Vice allowed or encouraged tends to the ruin of any people: and *this* it does, not only as it obstructs God's favour and may provoke him to give them up into the hands of their enemies; but also in a *natural way*, as it enfeebles men's spirits, enervates their strength, subdues their courage, and so renders them less capable of opposing resolute adversaries; and consequently more likely to become an easy prey to them.—A time of war is very precarious and hazardous; events are dubious and uncertain; no mortal man knows what the issues of it may be; whether the secure establishment of a nation's happiness, or its total overthrow and ruin.—Should not a people then in such a situation endeavour to be reformed from every thing, which would hazard God's favour, or excite his just displeasure! should not a whole nation, as one man, by sincere repentance return unto God, and walk in his ways for ever! this is the *most likely* nay the *only* method, to obtain the audience of our prayers, and to procure from a merciful God *success* against our *enemies*, together with the restoration of *peace*, and *prosperity* to our land.

IF we can be so happy as to prevail with God, thus to *pardon* our sins, to give us true *repentance* and a thorough *reformation*;
we

we may then please ourselves with the assured expectation of his favour and protection: that he will *return unto us and have mercy upon us, and save us for his mercy's sake*; that he will soon and effectually subdue our enemies, and turn his hand against all our adversaries.

God grant that such may be the happy consequences of *this day's solemnity*! Amen!



F I N I S.

